

Abstract

One embodiment of the present invention includes a system comprising a housing having an upper end and a lower end. The housing carries a plurality of movable blades defining an entry aperture proximate to the upper end, an exit aperture proximate to the lower end, and a chamber there between. An adapter may be provided for connection to the housing and for receiving an article storage container. The upper end of the housing carries a sensor responsive to the presence and absence of the article storage container. A memory device carries information about the presence and absence of the article storage container. An article determining and actuating station has electronics for interrogating the memory device, for controlling the plurality of blades and for determining the number of items dispensed. A receptacle collects articles that have been dispensed. Methods of associating a flow control device with an article storage container and of dispensing items are also disclosed.